

SEPARATION AND SPIRITUALITY

By: GLENN L. ARCHER

The Baptists were the first to conceive Church-State Separation; they should be the first to defend it. John Bunyan spending years of his life in Bedford jail and Roger Williams fleeing to Rhode Island in the midst of a bitter New England winter, are the symbols of something that has become as truly American as it is Baptist. They have taught us that religion is a personal matter between a man and his God, a matter too sacred for the dictation of any state or church.

Like all men of courage Roger Williams, like John Bunyan before him, refused to compromise his convictions. He was banished to the wilderness but his views lived after him in the model code of the commonwealth of Virginia and in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. POAU, the organization I represent here today has but one purpose:—to preserve for all Americans what the Baptists gave them.

Surely this principle of avoiding official interlocking of church and state has been a good one. It has served us well. The gigantic strides the Baptists have taken in recent years, the glowing reports of progress now being heard in this Convention, are sure indications that the church is thriving in this land. With more than 33,000 churches and nearly eight and a half million members you Southern Baptists certainly cannot claim that church-state separation has inhibited you. Another prominent denomination, the Roman Catholic, has scored far more significant achievements in this land than it has in many other lands where it has attained the religious monopoly it seeks. Contrast its parishes, its schools, all its institutions and the devotion of its people as you find them in America with what you find in these other lands—and you will see the difference. Certainly there are no large groups of Communists among the Roman Catholics of the United States as there are among the Roman Catholics of Italy, to give but one example. The Catholics have achieved much here and they can thank church-state separation for it.

So it has been with the Methodists, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians and all the larger and smaller religious groups of this country. They have not been held down, handicapped, crippled because the government did not pay their bills and build their churches and schools. They have, on the contrary, marvelously grown and thrived. I am no theologian. Perhaps I cannot accurately gauge the effect of church-state separation on the religious experience of the people. But I will say this thing which observation of clerical-dominated lands has taught me. You can put all of the state's power into the service of the church, you can build a cathedral on every corner, you can put an image of the virgin on every lamp post and a statue of a saint in every park—and still have millions who do not know why God sent His Son into the world. . . . Let us say only that the principle of church-state separation has served us well.

Now the amazing, the incredible has happened. Today this sacred principle of law which guarantees our religious freedom is under the fierce assault of the very people to whom it has brought the greatest prosperity—the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. There can be no doubt about this for the hierarchy has itself boldly proclaimed it. The official pronouncement of the bishops of this church on November 21, 1948 referred to the principle of separation as "the shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism." It called upon the faithful to work "patiently and persistently" for its destruction. The more recent statement of November 19, 1955 called for renewed effort in

the same direction. The principle is being undermined by 15,000 parochial schools with their four million pupils taught by 120,000 garbed sisters. It is being destroyed in the minds of many additional children who are being brain-washed by the teaching of tax-free garbed sisters in so-called public schools in thirty-eight states as of right now. It is being denounced by 590 Roman Catholic publications reaching twenty-two million Americans. It is being undermined by more than 1,500 Roman Catholic hospitals operating under a code which differs in considerable respects from the enlightened code of our medical profession. It is questioned by 150 Roman Catholic action organizations geared to influence every segment of American life—educators, lawyers, veterans, labor groups, editors, doctors and nurses, movie, radio and television—even Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

While the ends sought by these groups are ostensibly noble, the whole purport of them is to carve out a powerful, self-conscious enclave in American life. All of these organizations exist to enhance the power and prestige of the Roman Catholic Church and complete its domination of American culture. All of them exist to reduce or destroy the principle of church-state separation and the principle of equality of all faiths before the law. In operations subtle and overt they seek to bring to this one church official recognition, preferment and prestige, and to insure its dominance of American culture.

What we must understand is that this or that seemingly innocent request of the hierarchy for special favor is part of a master plan. The Roman Catholic drive in the United States is but a phase of the drive that has so tragically succeeded in other lands. Let us analyze this effort. When the hierarchy seeks tax funds for its sectarian schools its objective is not to educate American children. Or, it is that only incidentally. The first object is to make Catholics. The next object is to get control of all education—to achieve the result achieved already in Belgium where, according to a former premier, there are now two kinds of schools: the church schools paid for by the state and the state schools dominated by the church. In the opening phase of this drive modest goals are sought. Then, as progress continues, the goals become more and more ambitious as deference becomes preference, preference becomes monopoly, and monopoly becomes domination, and clerical domination spells the doom of personal salvation as we understand religion. See how the strategy changes and the goal remains. In the early days of our republic Roman Catholics used the principle of separation as their shield of protection. It was they who brought suits in the courts to drive God—the Protestant God, they called it—out of the public schools. Now look who is complaining because the public schools are "godless." The explanation is clear. The Roman Catholic hierarchy wants only a Roman Catholic God and the only schools they want are the ones they control. The goal is the same—domination.

When the Roman Church demands an American ambassador to the Vatican their demand is not aimed at the spiritual regeneration of either America or the Vatican. Nor is the aim to work for peace as all these highly pious protestations make out. The aim is to secure public recognition of Roman Catholicism, to designate it as the preferred religion. The end sought is prestige, advantage, power for this politico-religious organization. As this group gains the preferment and power they seek, the liberty of others is curtailed. All around the world these operations are ultimately the same.

When the Roman Church seeks public subsidies for its ac-

tivities in this country, this is merely part of that great world-wide Vatican operated movement that drives toward cultural and political dominance everywhere. The authority which teaches Spanish young people that it is quite proper and, indeed, their Christian duty to enter Protestant chapels and destroy their equipment, is the same authority which teaches four million American Catholic children that their religion alone is right and all others are counterfeit. When the Roman Catholic Bishops plead with the faithful to work "patiently and perseveringly" for the destruction of the separation of church and state, they are aiming ultimately at the official establishment of their church here. What they plan to achieve is a Spain-like or Italy-like result in the United States. What they are striving to attain is one church on the inside—fat, sleek, favored, rich with the publican's funds—and the other churches on the outside, sneered at, frowned on, harrassed, suppressed.

We must understand the world-wide context of Roman Catholicism or we do not understand it at all. We live in one world. The great forces operative today are world-wide in their scope. They are one and the same wherever we find them and whatever guise they may assume at the moment. Surely Communism has taught us this. Communism is one. A Communist in Budapest or Peiping or Rome has the same ultimate goal as a Communist in New York or Chicago, the same ultimate goal as a Communist in Moscow. Now much the same thing is true of other powerful political and social movements such as Vatican dominated Roman Catholicism. The means may differ from time to time. The strategy may vary from place to place. Yet the eventual goal is the same. What this movement seeks everywhere is its own aggrandizement and domination. Where the Roman Catholics are a minority the hierarchy piously requests religious freedom; where they are a strong majority it arrogantly demands the end of others' freedom. What we must understand is that any step toward preferential treatment of the Roman Church or tax support for its sectarian activities, is a step toward that.

The mention of Communism and Roman Catholicism in the same breath sets in motion an interesting train of thought. No fact more clearly establishes the gullibility of the public than this—that they have swallowed the idea cleverly spread by Roman Catholic propagandists, that the Roman Church has been the nemesis of Communism. There is nothing whatever to the claim. The truth is that lands dominated by Roman Catholic clericalism have been the softest spots for Communist penetration. Look at Italy itself, the home of the Vatican, a country claiming 99 per cent Roman Catholic population. At the last election the Italians gave 38 per cent of their vote to the Communist ticket. In Spain the dictator doesn't even dare to have an election. In a fit of absent-mindedness someone recently took a poll of students at the University of Madrid. 80 per cent of those polled expressed their disapproval of both the political regime and the church which so closely embraces it. But that is another story.

We have poured close to six billion dollars into Italy to keep that Roman Catholic land from going Communist. We're not having much luck even with Claire Boothe Luce on the job. What's the trouble? Well, I'll tell you the trouble. What we are doing in the case of Italy and these other church-states is to subsidize the kind of religious tyranny of which the people are thoroughly sick. It is a curious thing, isn't it, how these church-states we are trying to save from Communism subject our Protestant brethren to a tyranny as bad as the Communist tyranny itself. As a matter of fact, our brethren behind the iron curtain are freer to preach and hold their services than they are in Spain or Italy or many of the Latin countries. Remember this: Billy Graham has been invited to preach in Russia. But he has not been invited to preach in Italy. He would not be free to preach there. He would not be free to preach in any land where a clerical tyranny rules the roost and Protestants are subjected to all manner of indignity and discrimination. Any suppression of religious liberty in an iron curtain country is big news. But when it happens in one of these other countries it is always hushed up. One wonders why.

Let us have the truth out here today. The truth is that the

clerical-fascist tyranny of Spain reduces our brethren to the status of second class citizens and drives them into ghettos. The truth is that the Vatican inspired police of Italy have made life miserable for eight Protestant groups trying to operate in that unhappy land. The truth is that it is priest-inspired mobs in some instances that have demolished Protestant churches and attacked Protestant people in Colombia. If we had just one United States Senator who would take the floor and say: "I propose we give not one solitary American dollar to any nation that refuses religious freedom to any man"—that would be a brand new day in our history. If that were to be the rule the billions we are spending might have a chance to do some good.

The vice-president, when speaking in Latin America, was beguiled into saying the Roman Church as "the greatest bulwark against Communism." What he should have called it was the point par excellence of Communist penetration. It is not surprising that a Roman Catholic speech writer should have put that in Mr. Nixon's speech. What is surprising is that American Protestants let the statement go unchallenged. So far as I know only POAU and its vice-president Dr. John A. Mackay spoke up and refuted the false statement. The truth is that religious liberty, as Americans know it, has been ruthlessly ground to pieces by these two great systems of authoritarian power—Communism and Roman Catholic clericalism. That suave propagandist, Bishop Sheen, has ingenuously remarked that there are but two roads for the world to take—the one to Moscow, and the other to Rome. He needs to be told that so far as freedom-loving Americans are concerned neither one of these roads is safe since the end of both is tyranny.

To understand the drive of the Roman Church in the United States one must be conversant with its total world plan. One must examine its centuries' old strategy. One must study its laws and dogmas, its aims and actions all carefully designed to envelop whole nations and cultures. One must read a book like H. G. Wells' *Crux Ansata*. No stone is ever left unturned. No short-term trick is missed; no long term strategy is overlooked. No method that will serve the purpose is neglected. Every emotion is played upon; every desire, every yearning of man is harnessed. Every means, any means is justified—only let the end be served.

The hierarchy's plans are all well co-ordinated. No one knows when or where its hydra-headed power will strike. One day a Protestant missionary who has worked in a Roman Catholic dominated country for many years discovers, after a furlough, that he cannot obtain permission to re-enter. The explanation: Roman Catholic pressure in the State Department. The next day it is an arrangement our leaders have blithely agreed to, which would have deprived Roman Catholic Americans in the armed forces the right to marry non-Catholics in Spain unless a priest performed the ceremony. The explanation: the same. Another day it is a treaty agreed to by our State Department and recommended for Senate approval, from which the traditional "freedom of religion" clause has been mysteriously omitted. The effect would be to deny Americans on Haitian soil the right to worship God in their own way and to pave the way for the omission of this freedom clause from more important treaties. Always the culprit is the same. The most astute pressure group in Washington, perhaps in the world, has been at work.

When we contemplate this colossus we might well despair for freedom's cause. Let me tell you, friends, I often read these days that story about David and Goliath. When I read what he accomplished with that little sling of his I am profoundly encouraged. We often seem to be small and very much alone in this struggle. Yet we know the need for our work is great and pressing. If there were no such organization as POAU we should instantly have to create it. There are, to be sure, any number of fine inter-denominational agencies that might be looked to for leadership in this area. Yet in instance after instance you will discover that they are chronically incapacitated for such activity. As church groups, for example, they are unsuited to the role of plaintiff in litigations. Yet we know very well that it takes court action to correct evils and to secure observance of the law. Or, they may be federated groups representing independent bodies and, as such, have no authority to speak or act

for all. Or, they may be groups where extreme caution must be practiced and near unanimity secured before action can be taken. Or, again, they may feel themselves in a sensitive position so far as financial support is concerned. Relationships of theirs might be disturbed if they were to assume strong leadership in the church-state field.

This is, of course, no reflection on any group. I only want to point to the fact that there is one Protestant organization and one only, that is designed explicitly to provide the kind of leadership that is needed. We are not officially related to any other group. We are on our own, and being on our own, we are free to act decisively in any situation. The organization known as POAU was created by outstanding leaders of the major bodies of Protestantism to do this job. This is what we are for—to move in swiftly and decisively where the principle of separation is threatened, to do without delay or apology the thing that needs to be done. When the people of Bradfordsville, Kentucky found their school closed by a Roman Catholic school board and their children subjected to the teaching of nuns in another quasi public school, they appealed to POAU. When Jersey City's great medical center costing more than \$40,000,000 was turned over to Seton Hall, a Roman Catholic institution, in response to earnest appeals of our constituents we were in Jersey City the very next day. We began then and are continuing the lengthy legal proceedings that we hope will be successful in restoring these valuable installations to the people of Jersey City. How could any Protestant group you know about possibly have taken such action? When the State Department tried to slip through the treaty with Haiti to which I have alluded, it was POAU that discovered it. We promptly protested and alerted other Protestant groups as to what was going on. When the Christian Brothers, a Roman Catholic order, sent their high priced legal talent to Washington to assure the continuance of tax exemption for the brandy and wine they produce, they found POAU barring the way. Now, it seems they may have to pay their taxes the same as other distillers.

We need you. We need you imperatively to give your financial and moral support to our work. But this other fact is also true—I say it humbly and respectfully—you need us, too. We are working for you; we are working for all the American people doing a job that must be done if we are to keep freedom unimpaired.

Since it began operations in 1948 POAU has succeeded through its program of litigation in saving for the taxpayers of this country more than \$55,000,000 that would otherwise have gone to sectarian institutions in violation of the Constitution. Who knows how many more millions have been saved as officials the country over have become aware of POAU's interest and activity in this field? We have initiated numerous litigations to correct unconstitutional practices in the relations between church and state, and have helped in finance and counsel with many others. We have established more than fifty local chapters throughout the country. Their officers and members are the watchdogs of religious liberty in their communities. Our speakers are heard every week of the year in auditoriums, churches, halls—everywhere across the nation. Our magazine, Church and State, goes to about 50,000 members each month.

Slowly our work is becoming known and our position respected. The country has begun to see that we are not a hate group, that we take an educational and legal approach to church-state problems. They have also begun to see that we are a highly determined group and that we are not at all handicapped by timidity or fear. When the statement of the Roman Catholic bishops hit the stands last November, POAU was promptly called by every major wire service. They wanted us; they needed us. They did not agree with the position of the bishops. They knew that millions of Americans would not agree. So they wanted an answer that they could publish. They did not want to wait around for a year while study commissions met and discussed. They wanted an answer; they wanted it from a reputable source; and they wanted it now. There was just one group in existence ready to give it. That group was POAU. To

speak boldly was the prime reason why men like Newton. Dawson, Binns, and others established POAU.

Slowly the country has come to realize that there is on the other side of these questions a responsible voice. It is the voice of a group informed and articulate, a group that understands the principle of Church-State Separation and is determined to defend it against the most ruthless onslaughts.

POAU was created by Protestant leaders, outstanding Baptists among them. You helped us start; we count on you to help us carry on. You Baptists are uniquely qualified to lead in this battle because it is you who understand the importance of it and just what is at stake. It is you who must hold the fort until we are able to alert others. We are your creation; we are doing the work you commissioned us to do. We are your arm in this vital church-state area.

What should the Baptists do to help? Everyone of their seminaries should emphasize with everyone of the classes the importance of church-state separation. Surely the right to preach is the condition precedent to any ministry at all. Every department of every Sunday school and the program of every Training Union should stress the significance of church-state separation in our country. Every messenger should be an enrolled member of POAU, receiving vital information on church-state issues every month. Every church should be a scroll church supporting our work. At the present time forty-three Southern Baptist churches have POAU in their annual budgets. What could not be accomplished if everyone of the 33,377 Southern Baptist Churches would do the same! At the present time six Southern Baptist Conventions have placed POAU in their budgets. Think what it would mean to our program if all twenty-four conventions were to do likewise!

Every State Convention should form an alert committee to survey and move to correct any violations in its state. Every church should have a religious liberty committee ready to discover local breaches in the wall of Separation and to report them. Every program committee for every church camp, retreat, conference, school, should put Church-State Separation on the agenda for serious study and thoughtful discussion. Every editor should be glad to run objective stories dealing with our free heritage in matters religious. Every evangelist should express his support of the law that gives him his liberty to preach. All of us must conscientiously obey the law that grants us freedom of conscience and permits us to differ doctrinally without being persecuted or penalized.

If we should fail—we must not fail. Our heritage is too splendid, our liberty too precious. Yet should aggressive Romanism at last capture the heart of the North American continent, history has taught us all too well what would happen. When this political-social power attained to official establishment all its activities in education, in health and welfare, and even in religion would quickly taper off. Just as it has among people after people, the clerical blight would set in, withering every plant of progress. The result, at last, would be another Spain—a people to whom religion is a parade and a ceremony, a people whose church has kept them in dark ignorance of Christ and the wonders of His redemption, a people hungry for God but misled by a clerical tyranny whose strength is the army, whose religion is a fiesta, whose answer to man's eternal cry for freedom is the fine and the jail.

Our forefathers came to these shores seeking escape from the cruelest tyranny known to man—that which denies a man the right to worship God in his own way and compels him to pay for an establishment of religion in which he does not believe. Can it be that the oppression from which they fled has leaped the ocean and now threatens their children? Can it be that this discredited chapter of history in which men of one faith sought to coerce men of another, is now to be re-opened? Such a danger may seem remote as we sit here in this comfortable auditorium in the midst of a land made bright with freedom's light, amongst people devoted to its heritage. But it is not so far away. Last year I watched as police closed the Baptist chapel in Madrid. It wasn't much of a church, really. No Protestant Church in Spain is permitted to look like a church in any of its

exterior markings. It looked just like one of the residences among which it stood. It was only a small church these Baptists had. But the police closed it. They said they were making converts and they wouldn't stand for that. So they closed up their small church that didn't look like a church.

It was all done so quickly, so easily. In a few minutes the seals were in place, the police had gone, and the Baptists had lost the use of their chapel. I could hardly grasp what had happened. It didn't seem real, somehow. But there it was—this old miserable business still going on—only a few hours from home—not in the 12th century, but in the 20th century, a century of so-called enlightenment.

The more it changes the more it is the same. The battle for freedom is not over. It merely enters a new phase and goes on. The battle we face here is no different from the battle they face there. The struggle is one: it is the struggle for freedom. It is a struggle that will go on so long as there are oppressors and

oppressed. It is the struggle between those who believe religion is an official form and those who believe it is a matter of conscience between a man and his God.

What we are contending for stands at the very heart of religious faith. We have been called anti-Catholic; we are not. We are the Roman Catholic's best friend. We are trying to preserve the principle which makes the Roman Catholic free, which makes it possible for him and all other Americans to possess and exercise the most sacred of all freedoms—freedom of conscience. We are striving to keep Church and State separate so that the foul forces of oppression that have cursed other continents shall have no chance to wreck their havoc here. We are striving to keep religion clear of the blight of the state's dictatorship. We are striving to keep forever free that last citadel within the soul of man. Only with your help, with the help of freedom-loving Americans everywhere and with the help of God above all, can we hope to succeed.